



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**APPROVED**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**City of Fort Lauderdale**  
**Community Services Board**  
**December 14, 2020 – 4:00 P.M.**  
**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**October 2020-September 2021**

<b>MEMBERS</b>		<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
April Kirk, Chair	P	2	0
Marisol Simon, Vice Chair	A	1	1
Pamela Aiken	P	1	0
Yana Bannikova	A	0	1
Elizabeth Cupido	P	2	0
Christina Disbrow	P	2	0
Mary Kinirons	P	2	0
Richard Morris	A	1	1
Christi Rice	P	2	0
Terra Sickler (arr. 4:05)	P	2	0
Dana Somerstein	P	1	1

**Staff Present**

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager  
Eveline Dsouza, Senior Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development  
Simone Flores, CDBG Grants Administrator  
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, ProtoType, Inc.

**Communication to the City Commission**

**Motion** made by Ms. Kinirons, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, to send a communication to the City Commission stating that the CSB would like to be cohesive partners of the Budget Advisory Board as they move forward with assessing nonprofit grants in the community, and to create a unified process for how funds are distributed within the City. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

- **Quorum Requirement – As of December 3, 2020, there are 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Kirk called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and roll was called.

**II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS**

New Board member Pamela Aiken introduced herself at this time.

Ms. Sickler joined the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 12, 2020**

**Motion** made by Ms. Kinirons, seconded by Ms. Somerstein, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

### **IV. CDBG UPDATE**

Ms. Flores reported that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from fiscal year (FY) 2019-20 has received an extension due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as not all sub-recipients of this funding were able to spend all their dollars by the September 30, 2020 deadline. The agreements have been extended for another year.

Regarding the FY 2020-21 program year, contracts have been executed and forwarded to all sub-recipients. These agencies have already begun submitting invoices to meet January 2021 expenditure deadlines.

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

### **VI. JANUARY PLANNING MEETING OVERVIEW**

Ms. Flores explained that each year, the City prepares an annual Action Plan that is submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the new funding cycle. This plan is due August 15 of each year. A planning meeting is held in January for CDBG, Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA), and Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) applicants. The meeting is open to the public and anyone may attend; however, it is mandatory that applicants to these programs attend the planning meeting.

The planning meeting allows Staff the opportunity to explain the nuances of each program to prospective applicants. Ms. Flores noted that new Community Services Board (CSB) members may wish to attend as well, as the meeting provides them with an opportunity to learn about the different programs. The 2021 planning meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2021 and will be held immediately following the January CSB meeting. Public notice is available on the City's web page.

It was noted that agencies which do not attend this meeting are ineligible to apply for funds, as one of the purposes of the meeting is to ensure that all applicants are aware of the programs' rigorous requirements. Ms. Williams advised that she would reach out to the City's Legal Department for additional clarification. Ms. Somerstein suggested that entities unable to attend the mandatory planning meeting on January 11 could view the meeting afterward and provide an affidavit stating that they have viewed the meeting as required.

Ms. Williams advised that the Board may wish to cancel its January 11, 2021 meeting, as it falls on the same date as the planning meeting, and have the members attend the public planning meeting instead. It was clarified that the HOPWA request for proposal (RFP) is on the January Agenda, as that RFP will go out in February. The Board agreed by consensus to hold the January meeting so this RFP can be discussed.

## **V. HOPWA UPDATE & DISCUSSION**

Ms. Dsouza reported that FY 2020-21 HOPWA contracts were signed and executed the previous week. Agencies have submitted their budgets, been approved, and may begin billing once the City Manager signs the contracts.

Ms. Kinirons advised that she has reviewed previous years' RFPs, and has requested the opportunity to review current contracts with agencies that received HOPWA funding as well. She explained that not all of the reports from HOPWA agencies seemed to meet the deliverables set forth in their contracts, and she wished to better understand these differences. Ms. Dsouza replied that this information will be provided.

Ms. Kinirons also noted that the Board had intended to revisit a revised HOPWA proposal from SunServe at a previous meeting, although it is not included on this month's Agenda. She recalled that she had requested additional clarification of the difference between computer supplies and daily supplies. As there had been no CSB meeting in November, the request from SunServe had not been approved by the Board.

Ms. Dsouza showed documentation from SunServe that clarified their request for funding. Ms. Kinirons observed that the funds in question are "leftover" dollars for which no other agency is being given the opportunity to request, and which is being used to provide capital funding for one agency. She stated that this did not seem appropriate. Chair Kirk asked Staff how SunServe had come to request this additional funding.

Ms. Dsouza stated that the \$10,000 for SunServe was provided from a 2018 reserve allocation which had been divided among multiple agencies, including SunServe, Broward House, Care Resource, and Legal Aid of Broward County. This left a balance of \$15,000, which was requested by SunServe. The agency had later submitted its proposal with an itemized breakdown after the fact. Ms. Dsouza concluded that this allocation was awarded to SunServe before they were asked to provide a breakdown of the funding request.

Ms. Kinirons recalled that SunServe had originally intended to spend these funds on salaries. The request was later amended to use the funds for supplies, and the Board had requested greater detail of how the allocation would be broken down.

Chair Kirk emphasized the importance of ensuring that all funding allocations are made fairly and equitably in the future. She recommended that in the future, the Board should see more detailed proposals for the use of these funds.

Ms. Williams explained that the HOPWA agencies were invited to apply for additional funding support for activities during the ongoing pandemic. While the Board and Staff were working through how to award these allocations, it was determined that a small pool of funds remained. At this time, SunServe's representative asked if they could be awarded these funds for salaries. This request was made separately the other allocations of additional funding.

Because the amount in question was one-time funding and could not be used sustainably toward salaries, SunServe had changed the request to use the funds for another purpose. Ms. Williams noted that this was outside the typical Board process by which agencies submit formal proposals, as the funds requested were left over.

The Board discussed whether or not the funds have already been allocated to SunServe, recalling that there may have been some confusion because the request for leftover funds occurred separately from, but at the same time as, the overall allocation of funds to agencies. Ms. Kinirons expressed concern that approving the request could establish an unwanted precedent.

Ms. Disbrow also felt the additional request for leftover funds happened very quickly and the Board may not have had a clear understanding of it at the time. She was not certain it was fair to all agencies to approve extra funding for one agency when others did not have the opportunity to request it. Ms. Sickler agreed, stating that other organizations should be able to request additional funds as well.

Chair Kirk requested a recommendation on how to proceed regarding the leftover funds requested by SunServe. Ms. Cupido advised that if the Board decides not to grant the funding request, they should communicate this decision to the organization so they are not left waiting for a reply.

Chair Kirk commented that while Board members seem to agree that the request was not formally approved, Staff has stated that the funds were approved. She expressed concern that SunServe may have already incurred expenses to be covered by the additional allocation of funds. Ms. Kinirons stated that the Board had voted to approve the use of funds toward salaries, but has not approved any revised uses.

**Motion** made by Ms. Kinirons, seconded by Ms. Sickler, to approve just the three work stations for \$3289, and send with that a letter of understanding that in the future all funding requests will be equal opportunity to every eligible nonprofit.

Ms. Kinirons further clarified that the \$3289 would cover the purchase of three Dell computers.

Ms. Disbrow referred to the July 13, 2020 minutes, pointing out that SunServe's original request was for funds to purchase new computers, new office chairs, and filing cabinets.

She asked for clarification of whether or not the agency needed three new computers or a total of six. Chair Kirk observed that in July, the Board approved a total request of \$5266.72 that included all the above items. It was clarified that the original request for funds to purchase these items was made in June 2020, with itemization provided in July. The Board did not meet in August or November 2020.

The Board members reviewed emails between SunServe and Staff regarding both the agency's original proposal as well as the proposed use of leftover funds. It was clarified that these communications addressed two separate proposals from SunServe. Ms. Dsouza confirmed that SunServe had used the earlier allocation to purchase the supplies listed above, including three computers. Since that time they had brought in more case managers and requested three additional computers for them.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

#### **X. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION**

Chair Kirk advised that on December 10, 2020, the City's Strategic Communications Department announced they are now creating applications for nonprofit funding requests for FY 2022, which would be available on January 3, 2021. The email continued that applications will be reviewed by the City's Budget Advisory Board (BAB), which will make recommendations to be presented to the City Commission in July 2021.

Chair Kirk recalled that in previous years, the CSB had reviewed all social service and impact-based programming and provided recommendations for nonprofit funding to the City. She noted that in the past, the Board had discussed creating online portals through which grant applications could be submitted. She pointed out that a number of CSB members have significant professional experience with both grant writing and nonprofit organizations.

Ms. Williams stated that she had participated in discussion of this change with the City's Budget Department, which had considered the option of giving the responsibility for nonprofit funding to the CSB; however, because the CSB's primary role involves federal funding sources, they had decided to keep the proposed new grant application process separate, as it would use dollars from the City's General Fund. Federally funded programs such as CDBG and HOPWA would continue to come before the CSB.

Chair Kirk explained that her concern was that the CSB's knowledge base is more appropriate to be called upon for the nonprofit funding responsibilities that will be assigned to the BAB. She felt the CSB participating in both processes would be the only way to move forward with accepting online grant applications, and recalled that the Board has also advocated for virtual or telephonic options for attendance in the past.

She suggested that they meet with the BAB and work together to urge the City to develop an online funding portal.

Chair Kirk also expressed concern that if the CSB is unable to fund a last-minute request from one of its funded organizations, that agency might reach out to another advisory board such as the BAB for funding. She felt there should be a way to streamline and support the process of providing funds to nonprofits. She recommended reaching out to the City Commission stating their interest in meeting with the BAB and discuss ways these advisory bodies can work together and support one another.

**Motion** made by Ms. Kinirons, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, to send a formal letter to the City on behalf of the Board, that [the CSB] would like to be cohesive partners of the Budget Advisory Board as they move forward with assessing nonprofit grants in [the] community, and try and work together to create a unified process with applications and just in general communication on how funds are distributed within [the] City. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

## **VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Chair Kirk encouraged the new Board members to ask any questions they might have regarding how the meeting is held, noting that they follow guidelines found in Robert's Rules of Order. They may also reach out to Staff with questions if they wish.

Chair Kirk added that World AIDS Day is observed in December, along with the International Day of Disabled Persons and Human Rights Day. She emphasized the importance of these days in light of the services provided through the Board and by provider agencies.

## **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Francisco Gomez, Housing Case Manager for Care Resource, noted that the HOPWA agencies' contracts reflect how many clients each agency has served and the process by which they are served. While Care Resource is currently under budget by comparison with other agencies, they are helping the target number of clients. He offered to assist any of the Board members who might need additional clarification when reviewing the RFP and contracts.

Ms. Kinirons asked if the reports from HOPWA agencies will reflect only the number of clients served using HOPWA funds, or if they will include information on clients served using other funding sources as well. Ms. Dsouza replied that the agencies are only asked to provide information about the clients served using HOPWA funds and the time charged to HOPWA clients. Ms. Williams confirmed, however, that Staff can provide data regarding total clients served.

## **IX. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

These items were previously discussed.

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, ProtoType, Inc.]